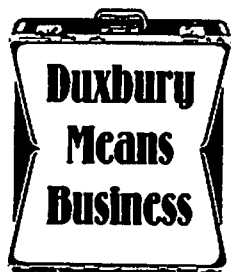


Sugar is as Sweet as it Sounds

By AUTUMN GOULD

Sometimes the owners of Sugar, Duxbury's newest boutique, don't even know what the store will look like when they arrive in the morning.

John and Pamela Coviello are always changing the store, rearranging things and adding new inventory, to keep it exciting, they said.



They opened Sugar in the beginning of the summer, an opening that was planned around Far

Far's ice cream shop.

"We had nine days until Far Far's opened, and we thought that if people saw us opening with them they'd come in and see the store. In those nine days, we turned this place from a dingy, dark, dry cleaner to this little bright store," John said.

During that time, Pamela and John were there working sometimes all night; one night, he said the police came by to see if everything was all right because it was so late.

Pamela either makes or embellishes everything sold at Sugar, including handbags, flip-flops, one of a kind t-shirts and handmade jewelry. Everything is unique, and she never makes a number of the same exact piece. "We have stuff you can't get unless you traveled to the city," he said.

"She is so creative. I can't do any of this, but I can talk. We make a good team," John said jokingly, and his gift for gab comes in handy when dealing with vendors.



John and Pamela Coviello, owners of Sugar, opened their business earlier this summer. John is a writer for DrumHead Magazine and Pamela is a former pharmacist. They have lived in Duxbury for eight years.



All of Sugar's merchandise was either made or embellished by owner Pamela. She wanted to make unique things that are also affordable, like jewelry, bags and clothing.

The couple makes the trip down to New York City three or four times a month for John's job as a writer at Drum-Head Magazine. While there, they do all the buying for the store.

"She goes to the garment district to buy everything, and we've established relationships with these vendors," John said. Because of these relationships, Sugar's prices are very reasonable. "We want people to be surprised when they come in here, thinking, 'This stuff is really nice, but wow it's so inexpensive,'" John said.

He said they are constantly checking their prices against other similar stores, and their goal is to be less than half of their competition's prices. "We wanted to open a shop with cool stuff but Marshall's pricing," he said.

Initially the pair had a six month plan to see if they could turn their store into something profitable, but John said after one month, they had a great return and people were really loving it.

John and Pamela have been living in Duxbury for eight years, but have met many more people since opening Sugar. "We've met some great people and made a lot of connections," Pamela said. Since they moved into their shop on St. George Street, John has joined their landlord's bluegrass band and Pamela said they've made friends with all the surrounding owners. "Our kids even play together," she said.

"This area is really like a community, because it's not Subway or Starbucks next to us, it's Benchwarmers and Uncommon Grounds, it's personal," John said. When they opened the store, they said everyone came around, patting them on the back, giving them words of encouragement.

Pamela said that Sugar has not experienced the drop in business as some shops have. "We're brand new so we have nothing to compare it to but we've been doing fine." She said people often come in, saying their friend told them about

the store and they had to come see it for themselves.

Before opening Sugar, Pamela was a pharmacist, something she said is very similar to what she is doing now. "I'm still helping people get things that they need, I'm just not attached to an insurance company anymore," she said, laughing.

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In addition to running the store, Pamela teaches craft classes for adults and kids, where they have made everything from jean pillows, to duct tape wallets to jewelry. "Instead of having things already done for them when they get here, I actually show them how to make things, every step," she said.

Some of the things Sugar is planning for the future are ladies' shopping nights, when the store stays open late and the hostess invites friends to come and shop, drink wine and eat. The hostess gets a discount on her purchases while the guests get a party favor of the hostess's choice.

Around Christmas time, the Coviello's want to plan a men's shopping night where their wives make up a wish list, and the men come in, pick out something from the list, and get it wrapped. John said that since men usually don't want to deal with shopping, this is a perfect idea.

They also hope to put in outdoor speakers and seating so that the overflow customers from Far Far's can sit outside and enjoy their time.

"This is all about independent business. Sugar is a textbook start-up business," John said, "It's so American."